

GROWTH IN GRACE

NO. 2700

A SERMON

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“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3:18.

IT is worthwhile to remark that this passage immediately follows the seventeenth verse, where the apostle says, “Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” He puts the one after the other, as if the one must be the means of the other. There had been some, in the apostle’s day, who had twisted, to their own destruction, certain expressions in the Epistles of Paul which Peter said were “hard to be understood;” and, therefore, he warned Christian men and women to take heed lest they, “being led away with the error of the wicked,” should “fall from” their “own steadfastness.” In order that they might know how to stand, and to be preserved from falling, he gave them this direction: “grow in grace;” for the way to stand is to grow; the way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression. If you see even such a simple thing as a child’s top rolling along your floor at home, you will observe that it will always stand upright as long as it keeps on rolling; but when it stops, down it goes. So is it with the Christian; as long as he is in motion, he stands; but if it were possible for the motion to cease, then the Christian would fall from his steadfastness. Glory be to God, he will be kept from falling, and he shall be presented faultless before the throne of God! The way to stand, then, is to go forward; the way to be steadfast is to progress; the way to be alive, according to the apostle, is to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We will offer, first of all, two or three remarks upon *growth “in grace” in general*; and, secondly, a few remarks upon *growth in grace being intimately connected with growth “in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

I. First, then, we shall offer some remarks upon GROWTH “IN GRACE” IN GENERAL. What shall we say about it?

The first remark we make is, that *there is a sense in which there is no such thing at all as growth in grace*. If you understand the word grace as signifying free favor, and the love of God towards His people, there is not, and there cannot be, any growth in that at all—

*“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,”—*

he is, by the grace of God, there and then justified, and complete in Christ Jesus. And if he lives till his hair is grey, he will never be more justified, and never be more beloved, than he is the very first moment in which he believes in Christ. As soon as ever I have a vital connection with the Lamb of God, I am “in grace.” Let me live on, let my grace grow, let my faith increase, let my zeal become warmer, let my love be more ardent, yet I shall not be more “in grace” than I was before. God will not love me more, He will not have a deeper and a purer affection in His heart to me than He has the very first moment I turn to Him; nor will His grace the less justify me, or less accept me, the first moment when I come to Him with all my sins about me, than it shall do when I stand before the throne. We never grow in the grace of

election. We are always, as Peter says in his first Epistle, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;” and in that sense of being “in grace” there is neither growth nor any retrograde movement. So also is it in the matter of justification—

*“In union with the Lamb,
From condemnation free,
The saints forever were,
And shall forever be.”*

And they are at any one time as much justified as they are at any other time. Give me to be justified to-day, then I was justified yesterday, and I shall be justified tomorrow. As soon as I put my trust in the Savior, I became complete in grace; so far as that was concerned, I was made perfect in Christ Jesus. I cannot be more than perfect; and, therefore, I cannot in that respect grow in grace; I cannot receive more justifying mercy; I cannot receive more pardoning grace; for I have had it all at once, and have so become perfect in Christ.

But you will remark that our text does not say anything about grace growing; it does not say that grace grows. It tells us to “grow in grace.” There is a vast difference between grace growing and our growing in grace. God’s grace never increases; it is always infinite, so it cannot be more; it is always everlasting; it is always bottomless; it is always shoreless. It cannot be more; and, in the nature of God, it could not be less. The text tells us to “grow in grace.” We are in the sea of God’s grace; we cannot be in a deeper sea, but let us grow now that we are in it. We cannot be more in it than we are, or than we have always been. We are in God’s grace; we are in the covenant; we are in the scheme of redemption; we are in union with Jesus; we cannot be more or less so, for we are eternally secure through the blood of our Savior. But while it cannot grow more, we can grow more in it, and so we shall “grow in grace.”

I must make another remark. *It is certain that, while the grace of God toward us does not grow, yet there is such a thing as the development of grace.* There are some persons who strongly object to the doctrine of progressive sanctification, and to our mentioning anything like growth in grace. My brethren are welcome to object if they like, but I am sure, if they read the Scriptures (they will surely not object to Scriptural terms), they will find growth in grace very frequently mentioned; if that does not mean progressive sanctification, then I do not understand the term “growth in grace” at all. It is quite certain that there are degrees in the development of grace. You will surely not say that the young man, who has been converted only for the last few months, knows as much of grace, understands as much about it, and has as much faith, and as much love, as the man who has for the last twenty or thirty years been earnestly engaged in his Master’s service. You will not tell me that one man, who is scarcely ever seen coming up to the house of God, and who is daily in a state of religious starvation, stands on a par in grace with a man who is laboring for his Master, whose love is evident to all, and whose faith is testified before the whole congregation. You will not tell me there is a dead level in Christianity, which all alike reach. If you do say so, I shall tell you that you have no eyes, or that you do not look about you. For it is certain that there are some who are further advanced than others are, some with greater faith than others have. There are “great faiths” as well as “little faiths,” great loves as well as little loves; there are men of ardent spirits who have grace more fully developed in them than it is in others. It is true, they are not more loved of God than others are, and not more justified, nor more accepted, for in that respect we all stand on a level, and there is no difference; but as to the development of grace in our souls, and the display of grace in our lives, everyone must admit that there is a difference between different saints. I cannot understand the difference existing between various ministers of Christ, if it is not because of the difference in the degrees of grace which they possess. Some have just started in the Christian ministry, and have preached a little about redemption, but they have not gone far enough to preach about election; or, at least, not about the vital union of every blood-bought child of God with the person of Emmanuel; or if they should now and then preach upon that blessed truth, they cannot talk about the eternal security of the saints, and declare how, against wind and tide, they shall all sail safely into the heavenly harbor. They have not grown enough in grace to preach on such themes as these; so will not everyone admit that

there are degrees of development in grace, while it is also true that there are none of us more justified, more elect, more chosen of God and loved of Him than any other believers are?

Now for a third remark, which is *that growth in grace is not to be measured by weeks, and months, and years*. There are persons who think that the age of a man will tell how much he knows about divine things. “Oh!” say some, “So-and-So is such a young man, what should he know about divine grace? There is a hoary-headed father there; he must know a great deal more.” If you talk like that, you will soon find out your mistake. God often delights to show how He scorns and scoffs at all the distinctions of man. He makes the young men prudent, and He gives even to children knowledge and discretion. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He ordains strength because of His enemies. It is true, we do believe, and we should believe that there is more knowledge beneath the grey hairs than under the youth’s curly locks; generally speaking, it is so. Yet God, in order to display His sovereignty, has so arranged that He sometimes puts His treasures into an earthen vessel that has not been fashioned more than a few years.

Do not suppose that persons grow in grace according to their years. Some grow faster in grace in five minutes than others do in fifty years. I believe that some saints progress further in grace in one single month than others do in twelve months or twelve years. I am sure I may speak concerning myself. I have sometimes grown more in grace, in one hour, than I have at other seasons in a week, a month, or a year, when God, in His infinite wisdom, has been pleased to give me a vision of the Savior, or to break up the fountains of wickedness that lay hidden in my soul. I have learned more in one hour, when the Holy Spirit’s hand has been upon me, than I have in weeks and months simply with my own study. God’s people grow like trees grow. Sometimes they take a start, and grow upward; at another time, they are growing downward. Sometimes, apparently, the sap sleeps within the branch—a winter time comes over it, and it is asleep.

Do not imagine, my dear friends, that because you are getting old, you are growing in grace. People are continually warning young men of their danger. No doubt we are in danger; but let me remind you that there is not an instance in Sacred Scripture of a young man disgracing his profession; but there are instances in Scripture of men of middle age and of grey hairs doing so. It is thus: we, who are young, are in the greatest danger; and, therefore, God upholds us to show the power of His grace; but some of you older folk conceive that you are not in peril; and, therefore, God allows you to fall, that He may stain the pride of your self-glorying, and let you see that it is not anything in flesh, neither age, nor standing, nor rank, nor condition, which ensures our safety; but that He holds up the humble, and casts down the proud. David did not fall into his great sin until he had come certainly to maturity, and into the very prime of life, and then he sinned with Bathsheba. Lot did not transgress so grossly before he became an old man. If you turn to the pages of Scripture, you will notice that, wherever there has been a lamentable fall—as in the case of Peter—it has been a man who has grown up, and become strong in years. God thus shows us that it is not mere years that can teach us grace—in fact, that years, and age, and learning, and talent, have nothing to do with grace; and He could, if He pleased, take a child six years old, and pour wisdom and knowledge into the lips of that child that could puzzle the seers of this world. He often takes the most unlikely instruments, and uses them for the accomplishment of His purposes; and because men have said that experiential preachers must have grey heads, he says, “No; it shall be a youth who shall lead the multitude; it shall be a child, out of whose mouth I will pour words of wisdom, for I will overthrow all human glory, and show mankind that it is not the preacher who is to be praised, but God.” Salvation is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs; but it is God that shows mercy. It is not the man who preaches, who accomplishes the work; but God working through the man. He could dispense with the man altogether if He pleased; at any rate, He will have the man He pleases, and at what age He pleases, and qualify him as He pleases.

Once more, *growth in grace is not to be estimated by our feelings*. There are some of you, beloved, who think you are not growing in grace because you do not feel as lively as you used to do. “Ah!” you say, “when I was young, everything was bright then. What peaceful hours I then enjoyed! I would go

over hedge and ditch to hear the gospel preached. I had such an intense desire to hear about God and Jesus Christ, such love to the gospel that, when I once got to hear a minister preach, it mattered not who ever he might be, it all seemed sweet. But now I am so depressed that I cannot enjoy the truth as I used to do.” Do not think, because your wild heat is gone, that you have not grown. When we light a fire, we always put the straw and kindling at the bottom; and when we first light it, there is a deal of flame, and a great deal of smoke. But, afterwards, when the flame gets hold of the coals, there is not so much blaze, but there is really more heat. You may have lost some of your flame and smoke, but you have more solid fire; we would rather warm our hands by the coals than by the straw, for that must soon go. So is it with divine grace; it begins with a flame which catches the lighter substances, and lays hold on the imagination and the passions; but, later in life, it appeals to the judgment, and makes the man one solid lump of burning fire. He is not a little flame, rising towards heaven, that the wind might blow out with a puff; but he becomes so strong a fire that the wind shall but increase the flame, and shall make the heat the greater. So it may be with you. Perhaps you have become more solid though you are less fiery.

Do not suppose, when you are depressed, that, therefore, you are not growing in Grace. Many of God’s plants grow best in the dark, and He often puts them in the dark to make them grow. When you are growing upwards, recollect that there is such a thing as growing downward. You may have had, yesterday, a divine manifestation that took you up to the top of the Delectable Mountains. You must not think you are big because you are up on high, for pigmies perched on Alps are pigmies still; and if you were ever so little, it would not make you any bigger if you were taken to the top of St. Paul’s. If, on the other hand, you are deep down in a mine, do not imagine that you are any the smaller for that reason. I can tell you that you will often grow faster in the dungeon than on the top of a mountain; but it is not a pleasant place to be in. When our depravity is revealed to us, when our desolation of spirit, and our utter hopelessness and powerlessness are uncovered and made manifest by God’s Holy Spirit, we grow, I believe, even faster than we do when, on the wings of seraphs, we are privileged to mount on high. So, do not measure your growth in grace by your feelings. Some of you make a kind of barometer of your feelings. Do not do so. If we are in Christ, we are in Christ by faith, and not by feelings; and recollect that, whether your feelings are good or bad, you are no more or less a child of God. Your faith, sinner, unites you with the Lamb—not your feelings. Trust Him in darkness; trust Him in distress, lean on Him when you cannot see Him; and when there seems nothing to walk on, still walk, for the ground is firm beneath the foot of faith.

Just by way of warning, let me urge you not to think that you are growing in grace *because you happen to be doing a little more for the church externally*. “Oh!” we often say, “now I am progressing, am I not? I am busy in the Sunday school, laboring hard there; I am preaching; I am doing this, or that, or the other; now I am truly growing in grace.” Ah! It is a proper thing to be diligent in good works, and to be abounding in acts of righteousness; but if you begin to say, “Now I am growing,” because of this or because of that, you have made a great mistake. It often happens that, when we are very full of public labors, we are very short in private devotions. I must confess that it has been so with me—and that is a very lamentable thing—for then I was not really growing. A man may have his hands ever so full before the world, and think he is doing much; but he may not be really growing in grace after all. Do not think that this is an excuse for anybody who is not doing much, you Issachar-like people, like “a strong ass between two burdens,” too lazy to lift either. I am not giving you a word of comfort. You are not growing, for you are doing nothing; and those who are doing something must not boast of their growth. It has more to do with private devotion than with public exercise; it has more to do with meditation than with explanation; it has more to do with contemplation and adoration than with public service. We must look more to the state of the internal matters, keeping up private prayer, and attending to the reading of the Scriptures. If we do not, however much we may seem to progress outwardly, we are not any richer; we are only beating out the little gold we had into a thinner plate, and spreading it over a wider surface. The more we do for Christ, the more He will do for us; but let us take heed that, while we water other peo-

ple's vineyards, our own is not neglected, and that the stones of the hedges are not cast down. May God grant you, brethren, to grow in grace!

II. Now we come to the second thought, THAT GROWTH IN GRACE IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH GROWTH "IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST." In fact, there cannot be any grace at all except as we know Christ, and there can be no growth in grace except as we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We may always test whether we are growing by this question—Do I know more of Christ today than I did yesterday? Do I live nearer to Christ today than I did a little while ago? For increase in the knowledge of Christ is the evidence as well as the cause of true growth in grace. In order to prove this, I will mention one or two Christian virtues, and you will see that they must increase as we know more of Christ.

With regard to love, some of us say, "How little we love Christ!" Many of you sing—

*"Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought—
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His, or am I not?"*

That is a very good hymn—I find no fault with it—but please do not sing it too often. Now and then, you are welcome to it, but get through it as quickly as you can. I would far rather hear you sing that grand hymn of Toplady's—

*"A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear, with Your righteousness on,
My person and offering to bring."*

"Oh!" you say, "I long to grow in love. I want to know that I love Jesus. I want to feel my heart going out after Him, and my soul knit to Him." Well, the way to grow in love is to know more of Christ. The more you know of the Savior, the better you must love Him; the more you discover of His beauties, of His excellences, of His virtues, of His perfections, and of His glories, the more your soul will be drawn towards Him. I tell you, who do not love Christ at all, it is because you do not know Him; for if you knew anything of Him, you would love Him in proportion to your knowledge. The more you know of my Master, the more you will love Him. You have only lifted one corner of the veil that shrouds His forehead, you have seen but one portion of His visage, so you love Him; but if you had faith to lift the veil entirely, to see all of His blessed countenance, to mark the majestic sweetness which sits enthroned upon His lofty brow; if you could descant on His eyes, which are "like the fish pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-Rabbim"—if you could describe Him as being "altogether lovely," ah! You would love Him more. Blessed are the men that improve upon acquaintance! Jesus Christ is one of those blessed ones; the more you know of Him, the more you love Him. Sweet Jesus! When I first saw You, I loved You! When first Your wounded hand and bleeding side were uncovered to me, then I loved You. Ah! But that love is nothing compared with what I have now. And oh! When I shall see You as You are—when my soul becomes changed into love—the love I have now shall seem to have been nothing but a spark compared with that vehement flame of love which I shall have to You then. Know more of Christ; read more of Him; think more of Him; ask about Him more; because you will be sure to grow in the grace of love, in proportion as you know more of Christ.

So is it with regard to *faith*. What is the reason why so many of us groan because our faith is so feeble? It is because we do not know enough of Christ. There are many people who need to know a great deal more about Jesus than they know at present; and if they knew more about Jesus, they would have more faith. "Oh!" says one, "when I look at myself, I think, 'Oh, what is to become of me?' Then I search to see if there are not some evidences of grace." That is all wrong! You have no business to look there; you will not grow in faith by looking at yourself. One look at Jesus is worth fifty at yourself. If you would have more faith, keep your eye on Jesus. The wounds of Christ on Calvary are the mothers of faith; these are the breasts from which faith must draw its nourishment. If you would grow in faith, you must live near to the cross. The sweet flower of faith was first sown in Christ's precious blood, and it

must be watered by it every day. Know more of Christ; think more of Him; and your faith will increase. Your little faith would soon get strong if you lived more on Jesus. If you would become Great-hearts by and by, and knock those giants about as terribly as Mr. Great-heart did of old, live near to Jesus; live with Jesus; feast at His banqueting table; for there is no food so strengthening to the spirit as the flesh of your Lord, and no wine can so invigorate your soul as the blood of Jesus Christ your Savior.

So is it with regard to our *courage*; for that is a Christian grace and one in which many are terribly deficient. Our Christian courage will always increase in proportion as we know Christ. We have far too many timid Christians who have not courage enough, I was about to say, to speak to a cheese-mite; they would not be able to profess the name of Christ before the smallest creature in the world; they would almost be ashamed to declare that they loved the Savior even within bare walls, for fear some bird of the air should hear them, and go and tell the tale. They are so ashamed of their own faith (and yet it is real faith) that they scarcely dare to speak. The smallest stone in the road would make them stumble; a straw would be almost as great to them as a range of mountains like the Himalayas would be to others; they would be entirely cast out of the road if they had the least prospect that there could be a shadow in it for them to pass by. It is because we do not know enough of Christ that we are afraid of anything. I believe that, when we come truly to know Christ, we shall be afraid of nothing at all. Shall we be afraid of man? No; we shall say, "Whether it is right to obey God rather than man, judge you." Shall we be afraid of the devil when we know Christ? No; we shall say, "Christ has the devil chained, and He can always pull the dog of hell in when he attempts to bite us. Christ has hold of the dragon, and he cannot inflict deeper wounds than Christ wills." We shall not be afraid of the messenger of death, for we shall regard him as an angel of the covenant sent to fetch God's people up to heaven. Courage will always be increased in proportion as we know more of Jesus; and if we could have Christ for our daily and hourly Companion, I believe all the hosts of hell, marshaled in battle, would no more frighten us than would a flock of small birds that might settle upon our path, but we should say, "In the name of the Lord, we will destroy them." If you would have more true Christian courage, get more of "the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

So is it with regard to our *zeal*, which is a grace sadly lacking in these times. If we would be more zealous, we must live nearer to Christ. If the Son of man were to come now, would He find zeal upon the earth? His own question was, "Shall He find faith?" But would He find zeal? It would be difficult even for Him to discover much of it among Christians. There is sound orthodoxy, but no zeal; there is heterodoxy, but still no zeal. Where do you find it? Just here and there. There is a remnant, according to the election of grace, who are zealous for God; but, in these times, we are sorry to say it, religion has degenerated into a kind of formality. It is a fashionable thing to be pious. We have been going on in the same track as other people; there is an old cart-rut, and we all drive along it. We have kept on at the same pace as our fathers; but, oh! If we knew more of Christ, we would have more zeal.

I cannot think it possible for men to lack zeal when they know Christ. They would then say, "Did my Savior shed His blood for me, and shall I fear even to die for Him? Did He come all the way from heaven to earth to save souls, and shall not I also seek to win them for Him?" Should we have so many lazy preachers if they had more of Christ in their hearts? If they understood more of Jesus, should we have so many slothful, sluggish members in our churches, with so many who can make any excuse rather than labor for Christ, patching up any empty apology for idleness? No; brethren, if we knew more of the Savior, if we had more frequent visions of Him, if we saw Him more often on His cross, and viewed Him more frequently sitting with the crown upon His head, we should say, "I vow revenge against my sloth; all I can do will be too little for so good a Lord—

*"All that I am, and all I have,
Shall be forever Thine;
Whatever my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign.
Yet if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,*

*I love my God with zeal so great,
That I should give Him all.”*

It is no use to try to get more zeal except in the right way, knowing more of Christ; and if we seek to grow in zeal as certain people we might mention have done, we shall have a zeal like a house on fire; it will do more mischief than it will do good. There may be some heat, and a great deal of illumination; but it will die away, by and by, into black ashes, poisoning the churches everywhere. I have seen a certain kind of revival in England, and I can always tell where such “revivals” have been by the scarred state of the places after them. These so-called “revivals” have been worked by excitable meetings, held by sundry preachers who have invented strange doctrines, but have said nothing about the grace of God. They have for a time stirred up the people to a kind of religious *furor*, and they have left behind them a very desert. Before them it was like a garden of the Lord, but behind them barrenness and desolation. The church has been divided; there has been a reaction, and the people have sunk into the most lamentable condition. If we would have true zeal, it must be by the preaching of the good old doctrine, proclaiming Jesus Christ and Him crucified; for anything else comes of the devil, and to hell it shall tend; its issue shall be destruction, and not salvation. But if we keep to the truth of God, there will be “revival” enough. We want nothing but the good old-fashioned gospel to stir the world again. Though men have tried new schemes, God will not own them. All these heresies must be swept away, and the true gospel—distinguishing grace of God in all the sovereignty of election—must yet again be preached; and when it is preached in all its fullness, then shall the church be zealous, and then shall Zion arise, and shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments.

Further, if we would grow also in *the grace of brotherly kindness*, we must know more of Christ. O beloved, we must lament that there is too little brotherly kindness in the world! There is a great deal of that mawkish, mistaken kindness which says, “We must never say anything contrary to anybody else’s opinion. If we know of a doctrinal error, we must not expose it, because love of our brethren implies that, even if they are wrong, we would not tell them of it.” But I think true brotherly kindness is always to preach the truth, and tell our brethren where they are wrong, and give them the opportunity of getting set right; to preach whatever we believe to be true, and to maintain what God has taught us; and then, after all, to say, “Well, brother, you differ from me. I am not infallible; I still love you.” But that is no love which makes us hide the truth. True love will make us honest, zealous, and affectionate.

Why don’t we love one another as much as we ought? It is because we do not love the Savior enough, and we have not seen enough of Him. If we had known more of the Savior, I am sure we should love Him better. I met with a strange idea when reading a book by old Burroughs, the other day. He says, “If Jesus Christ were to come down to His church now, He would see some of His children with black eyes; some others would be seen scratched in the face, and some bruised all over. He would say to them, ‘What have you been doing?’ If one should answer, ‘Lord, I have been fighting with my brother, and he did this;’ the Lord would say, ‘Children of one family fight! The birds of one nest disagree! How sad it is!’” It is a strange thought, but it may be a profitable one; for if our Lord Jesus Christ finds His people quarrelling, what will He say? You may remember a story I have told you before. An old Scotch elder had been disputing with his minister at an elders’ meeting. He said some hard things, and almost broke the minister’s heart. Afterwards, he went home, and the minister went home too. The next morning, when the elder came down his wife said to him, “Eh, Jan! You look very sad this morning; what’s the matter wi’ you?” “Ah!” he said, “you would be sad too if you had had such a dream as I’ve had.” “Weel, and what did you dream about?” “Oh! I dreamed I had been at an elders’ meeting, and I said some hard things, and grieved the minister; and as he went home, I thought he died, and went to heaven. A fortnight after, I thought I died, and that I went to heaven, too; and when I got to the gates of heaven, out came the minister, and put out his hand to welcome me, saying, ‘Come alang, Jan, there’s nae strife up here, and I’m happy to see you.’” The elder went to the minister to beg his pardon, but he found that he was dead; and he laid it so to heart that, within a fortnight, the elder himself departed; and I should not wonder if he did meet the minister at heaven’s gate, and hear him say, “Come along, Jan, there’s nae

strife up here.” It will be well for us to recollect that there is no strife up there. Glorified saints have no strife among themselves; and we would love one another more in brotherly kindness if we thought more of heaven, and more of our blessed Jesus.

Lastly, there is another grace in which we need to grow; that is, *the grace of humility*. I am sure we would increase in that grace if we lived nearer to Christ. O humility, most precious thing, you are most rare! He who talks most of it has least of it. He who preaches of it best full often is least the subject of its power. O humility! I have sometimes thought that you were a phantom, and that pride was the reality. Humility, where are you? The depths of poverty say, “You are not in me,” for the poor are often proud. The heights of riches say, “You are not here,” for the rich are often proud, too. O humility! You are not to be found in science, for philosophy puffs up. You are not to be found in ignorance, for that is the mother of pride. O humility, where can I find you? Where are you? Nowhere can I see you, or know what you are, except I sit at the feet of Jesus, and behold myself a lost, ruined sinner purchased by divine love. If you, dear friend, would be truly humble, you must look at your Savior, for then you will say—

*“Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?”*

You will never feel yourself such a worm as when, by faith, you see your Savior dying for you; you will never know your own nothingness so well as when you see your Savior’s greatness. When you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you will be sure to grow in humility. Growing Christians think themselves nothing, but, full-grown Christians think themselves less than nothing; and the nearer we get to Jesus, the smaller self will appear to be. Self and Christ can never come close together. When I stand near self, Christ is small; when I stand near Christ, self is small. May God grant to you, dear friends, to grow in the knowledge of Christ! Read the Scriptures more. Seek more the influences of the Holy Spirit upon them; spend more time in devotion; ask God the Holy Spirit to give you a fresh sight of Calvary; be more often on the mount of transfiguration, in the garden of suffering, in the hall of agony, under the cross of crucifixion; live with Jesus, and near to Him; and so, changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, you shall each one of you grow unto the stature of a perfect man or woman in Christ Jesus.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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